The
Thoreau Society Bulletin
Special Issue on
The Thoreau Institute

ISSN 0040-6406 Number 213 Special Issue

The Thoreau Institute, a Shared Vision

In 1992, The Thoreau Society embarked upon an exciting opportunity to unite with the Isis Fund (The Walden Woods Project) in a partnership that would allow both organizations to further their missions. The Thoreau Institute is the culmination of the recently formed partnership between the two groups. A collaborative effort of the Walden Woods Project, predominantly concerned with land preservation, and The Thoreau Society, historically involved with preserving the works of Henry David Thoreau, the Thoreau Institute improves and extends the preservation efforts of each organization.

Plans embraced by both organizations for the development and management of the Thoreau Institute will result in an economically sound institution, well-equipped to continue in perpetuity and to support The Thoreau Society's time-honored and well-respected tradition of scholarship and education in the humanities. The well-timed new entity will be nourished by the Society's deep commitment to increase, preserve, and make accessible an important and inclusive collection of materials related to Thoreau. In an effort to further the Society's role in the humanities and compliment the land preservation acquisition of the Walden Woods Project, a significant priority of the Institute will be the development of programming involving the environmental, literal and social philosophy of Henry David Thoreau.

As a physical compound, the Thoreau Institute will consist of an existing turn-of-the-century manor and a newly constructed library and technology center. The existing English Tudor estate on the property will eventually be refurbished and serve as a retreat and seminar center for scholars, teachers, journalists, business persons, and other concerned citizens interested in the life, work and philosophy of Thoreau. A state-of-the-art library and technology center will be built behind the existing home. The new building will house the world's most comprehensive collection on Thoreau in a climate-controlled facility that meets all of the lighting and circulation criteria for historic preservation. The soon-to-be constructed facility includes a technology center that will provide worldwide access to Thoreau's message. We expect the library and archive center to open in the fall of 1996 and plan to host guests at the seminar facility approximately two years later.

Nestled in the midst of Walden Woods, and only a few hundred feet from the Beech Spring and the Beech Grove Thoreau often visited, the Thoreau Institute will provide students of Thoreau with the unprecedented opportunity to study his works in the surroundings he loved.

Thoreau Society leaders and Senator Kennedy share enthusiasm for the Thoreau Institute. From left: Kathi Anderson, Brad Dean, Elizabeth Witherell, Joel Myerson, Walter Harding, Bob Galvin, Senator Kennedy.

The Thoreau Society Bulletin is published quarterly by The Thoreau Society.

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The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an international not-for-profit organization founded to stimulate interest in the life, works and philosophy of Henry David Thoreau.

To fulfill its mission, the Society:

- conducts an educational and public outreach program in collaboration with the Concord Museum in Concord, (508) 369-9763. Please call the Museum's Director of Education, Jayne Gordon, to schedule a presentation.
- owns and operates The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, a visitor's center with a bookstore and gift shop. The Shop is located at the Walden Pond State Reservation.
- operates and develops programming for the Thoreau Institute, in partnership with the Isis Fund/Walden Woods Project.
- sponsors various Thoreau-related educational programs and excursions throughout the year.

Membership in the Society includes subscriptions to its two publications, *The Concord Saunterer* (published each Autumn) and *The Thoreau Society Bulletin* (published quarterly). Society members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise purchased from The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond and advance notice about Society programs, including the Annual Meeting held in Concord each July. Contact The Thoreau Society administrative offices in Lincoln, Massachusetts for membership information.

The Thoreau Society Directory

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Inquiries about merchandise (including books and mail-order items) should be directed to Stephanie Kornfeld, Merchandise Manager, The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742-4511, U.S.A.; tel: (508)287-5477; fax: (508)287-5620; e-mail: tsshop@aol.com.

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The Thoreau Society Bulletin is edited by Bradley P. Dean and Debra A. Caton.

Ground Broken for Thoreau Institute

Dignitaries, enthusiasts flock for ceremonies at Baker Farm

RICHARD FAHLANDER

[Editors' note: The following article is reprinted from The Lincoln Journal of 28 September 1995.]

Henry David himself would have approved.

At the Monday morning ground breaking for the new multi-million dollar Thoreau Institute, a gentle rain reminded the 100-plus attendees of the fragile nature of our best laid plans.

Located on Baker Farm Road in Lincoln, the institute is a joint venture between the Thoreau Society and the Walden Woods Project.

Dignitaries, celebrities, local officials, Thoreau enthusiasts, and ordinary folks attended the hour-long program.

In welcoming the institute to Lincoln, Selectman John Kerr recounted the town's pioneering history of land conservation.

"Here in Lincoln, the roads are still narrow, the vistas rural ...," he said. He praised the "generosity and determination" of the people who made the institute and its attendant land preservation a reality.

The existing Tudor mansion was purchased last year and will be refurbished and serve as a seminar and retreat center for scholars and teachers.

A 5,000 square foot addition will house a state of the art archive and technology center. The new building will provide a handicapped accessible, climate controlled, fire proof, and secure environment for the world's most comprehensive collection of Thoreauvian works.

The archive and technology center are scheduled to open in 1996. The renovation of the former Adams estate as a seminar and retreat center is scheduled to be completed in 1998. The total cost for acquisition and construction is estimated at $5.5 million.

Other institute initiatives include access to the Internet via a Thoreau Home Page on the World Wide Web and a cable television venture. Through new technologies the institute will develop ongoing educational and curatorial programs for Thoreau enthusiasts around the globe.

On Monday, though, the focus was on Thoreau's presence in the immediate area.

Featured speaker, Senator Edward Kennedy recalled picnics with his family at Walden Pond and in the surrounding woods. "Their quiet beauty inspired a lifelong interest and commitment to the environment in all its aspects," he said.

Saying the arts and humanities are "a priceless national resource," Kennedy decried "know-nothings and mindless budget-cutters" who believe that culture and the arts are expendable.

Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities Sheldon Hackney

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Senator Edward Kennedy recalls family trips to Walden
Left to right: NEH Chair, Sheldon Hackney; Senator Edward Kennedy; Walden Woods Project founder, Don Henley.

A Dream Realized

Joel Myerson

[Editors' note: The following speech was delivered by Thoreau Society President, Dr. Joel Myerson, at the Thoreau Institute's ground breaking ceremonies in September 1995.]

I am delighted to be here today to break ground for The Thoreau Institute—and more specifically—for the first tree that will dwell in the Institute's contemplative gardens.

When it is complete, the Institute will be comprised of three main elements—an archive facility to preserve the world's most comprehensive collection of Thoreau's works; a state-of-the-art technology center to connect to the information superhighway; and a contemplative retreat and seminar facility where scholars and teachers will come together to develop scholarly research and multi-disciplinary curricula.

The Thoreau Institute is a dream realized for The Thoreau Society whose mission to spread the ideas of Thoreau has been impeded by financial limitations. For some time now, we have been pleased to provide information and support to the Walden Woods Project, and its founder Don Henley. Now, with the Thoreau Institute collaboration, we are delighted to have the opportunity to combine our organizations' themes of land preservation and archival pursuits here in this state-of-the-art facility that will then spread these ideals throughout the world.

With the availability of what will be the climate-controlled archive, we have attracted the interest of some extraordinary people who will be donating some of the world's most remarkable Thoreau collections to the Institute.

Raymond Adams was a founder of The Thoreau Society and one whose enthusiasm for collecting inspired others to do so. His collections include manuscripts, letters, rare books and Thoreau family papers.

Highlights include:

- The first Page of Thoreau's 1837 Journal.
- A letter from Thoreau to H.G.O. Blake dated 1855.
- And a small gray arrowhead found by Thoreau.

Thoreau Society President Dr. Joel Myerson delivers highlights of collections recently donated to the Society.

We are indeed grateful to Raymond Adams for this collection.

The Roland Robbins collection is equally significant. It includes project files for the Robbins' archaeological work, including the excavation of Thoreau's cabin site. It also includes the first day of issue Thoreau stamp materials and about 75 maps and drawings.

Today, we are honored to have with us the Robbins' family who are seated here among us.

Geri Robbins, Bonita Robbins, Jean Robbins Brown—please stand.

The collection of Walter Harding is—without question—the largest collection—public, private or institutional—of research materials on the life, works, and influence of Henry David Thoreau. It includes more than eleven thousand catalogued pieces including books, pamphlets, photographs and newspaper clippings. We are, of course, thrilled and honored to be the stewards of this remarkable collection.

Mr. & Mrs. Harding are here with us today and I'll ask them to please stand in recognition and appreciation.

I'd just like to add that it is not just the collection of these families which make them remarkable. It is the integrity and perseverance in each of them in collecting our history ... and it is the enormous benevolence and responsibility they've shown in sharing this history with the rest of the world.

Through their generosity, the teachings of Thoreau may inspire a new generation—just as they have inspired such individuals as Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and John F. Kennedy. By doing so, we, as a society, will benefit.

Thank you.

With deep appreciation, The Thoreau Society gratefully acknowledges the Adams, Harding and Robbins families. Descriptions of the recently donated collections will appear in future issues.

Ground Breaking, from page 2

described Thoreau as an "unlikely hero for American culture" whose legacy proved that "the market is not always a good judge of lasting values."

Walden Woods founder and performing artist Don Henley said he hopes the institute will mirror Thoreau's ability to create a "marriage of the literary to the landscape." He said it will be a place for the people to appreciate the "interconnectedness of humankind to nature." The Walden Woods Project has preserved 86 acres adjacent to Walden Pond.

Other speakers were actor and environmentalist Ed Begley, Jr., Thoreau Society President Joel Myerson and Walden Woods Executive Director Kathi Anderson.

Following their remarks, Kennedy, Henley, and Hackney scooped shovels of damp dirt around a pine tree planted to mark the groundbreaking for the institute. "I don't think I'll quit my day job," quipped Kennedy.

The day began with a live interview with Henley and Anderson on the "Today" show. Following the program, as guests made their way to a buffet luncheon, they stopped to admire an original Thoreau manuscript on Sir Walter Raleigh, dated 1843.

Area educators and residents will be working on a number of projects in conjunction with the institute.

Concord-Carlisle High School science teacher Al Robichaud will head a teacher's advisory committee to develop an educational curricula based on Thoreau's conservation ideals. Robichaud said his first task will be to recruit other teachers.

Over a cup of coffee under an umbrella Concord activist Gerry Tolman celebrated that "something is getting done. It can be hard to be an environmentalist, there is so much frustration. Here you can see what happens when dedicated people have the tools to work on a problem."

Though the Thoreau Institute is a giant undertaking, at least one attendee expressed the need to construct it with the former Concord resident's values in mind.

"As you go forward, please remember that Lincoln is a town with village values," Kerr said. "As you go, and as visitors arrive, let's work together very closely to make certain that you manage their access carefully so that it enhances– rather than defiles–what is here."

THOREAU INSTITUTE AWARDED NATIONAL GRANT

RICHARD FAHLANDER

[Editors' note: The following article is reprinted from The Concord Journal of 25 January 1996.]

The newly-established Thoreau Institute has received a major boost with the award of a $575,00 challenge grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to the Isis Fund/Walden Woods Project. A portion of the grant will be applied to the construction of the institute's archives building and media center at Baker Farm Road in Lincoln. The remainder will be used for program development and the establishment of an endowment fund.

The federal agency administers the funding program which offers long-term support to major initiatives in the humanities. A condition of the challenge grant requires the recipient to raise a 3 to 1 match of non-federal/federal funds. A minimum of $1,725, 000 must be raised from private contributors.

Architects' rendering of the Thoreau Institute

Walden Woods Executive Director Kathi Anderson said approximately $800,000 in matching funds is in hand. She said another "sizable" private foundation grant is about to be filed.

Also on the agenda is the hiring of a permanent executive director for The Thoreau Society, which will administer the institute. Ellen Spear, the second of two acting directors, left the position in December. Anderson, who is on the Search Committee said, "The search goes on. We have found that the process is necessarily long to get the right person."

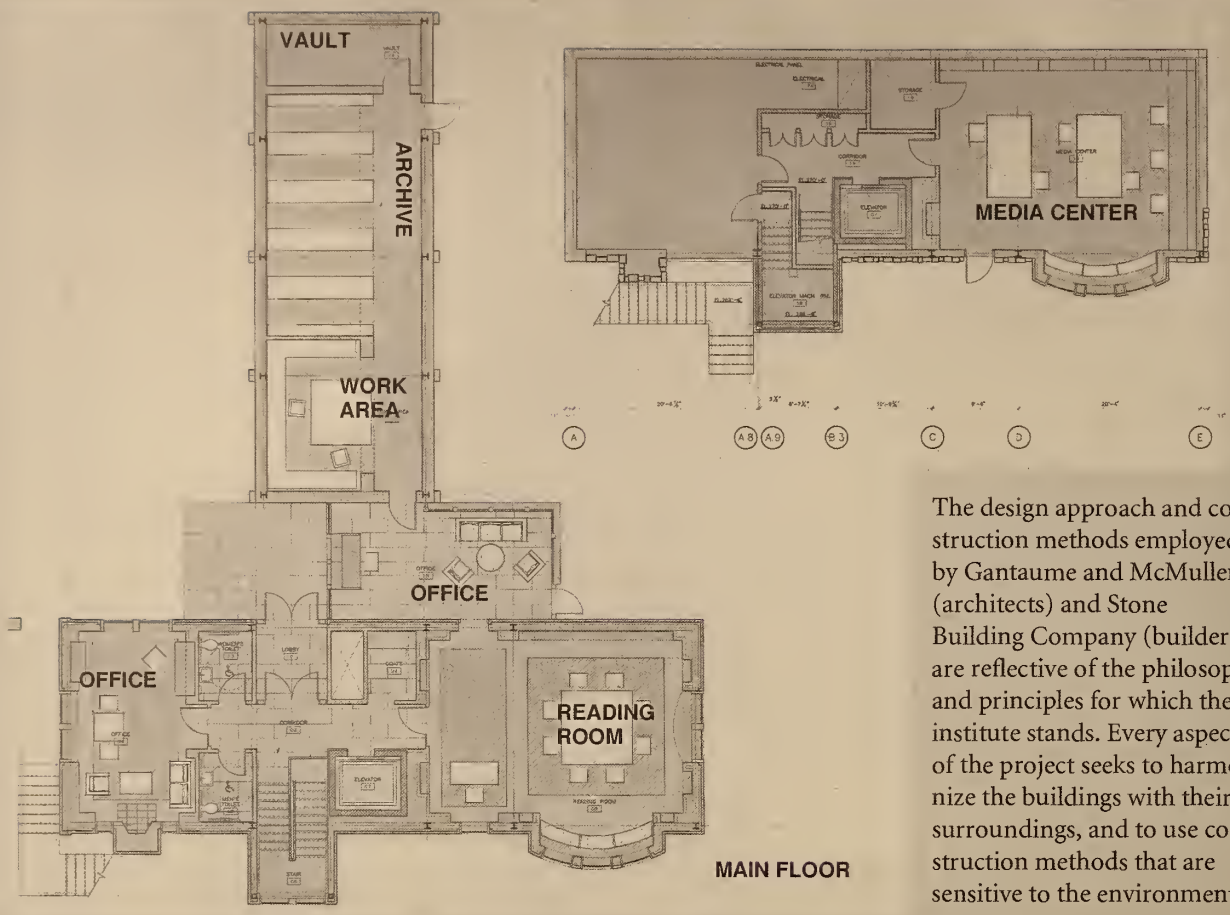
A collaborative effort of the Walden Woods Project and The Thoreau Society, the Thoreau Institute will include a library containing books, manuscripts, artifacts, and a reading room, and a media center. Anderson said several important collections pledged to The Thoreau Society by private donors will be housed and made accessible to the Institute. The Society expects to create the world's most comprehensive research library devoted to Thoreau and his contemporaries. The institute's media center will make Thoreau's writings and his ideas, as well as a catalogue of the collections and information about ongoing research; available on the Internet, on CD-ROM and on site.

The grant award came on the heels of a fierce congressional battle over continued funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Senator Edward Kennedy, who attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the institute last September, congratulated the Walden Woods Project and The Thoreau Society for winning this competitive award.

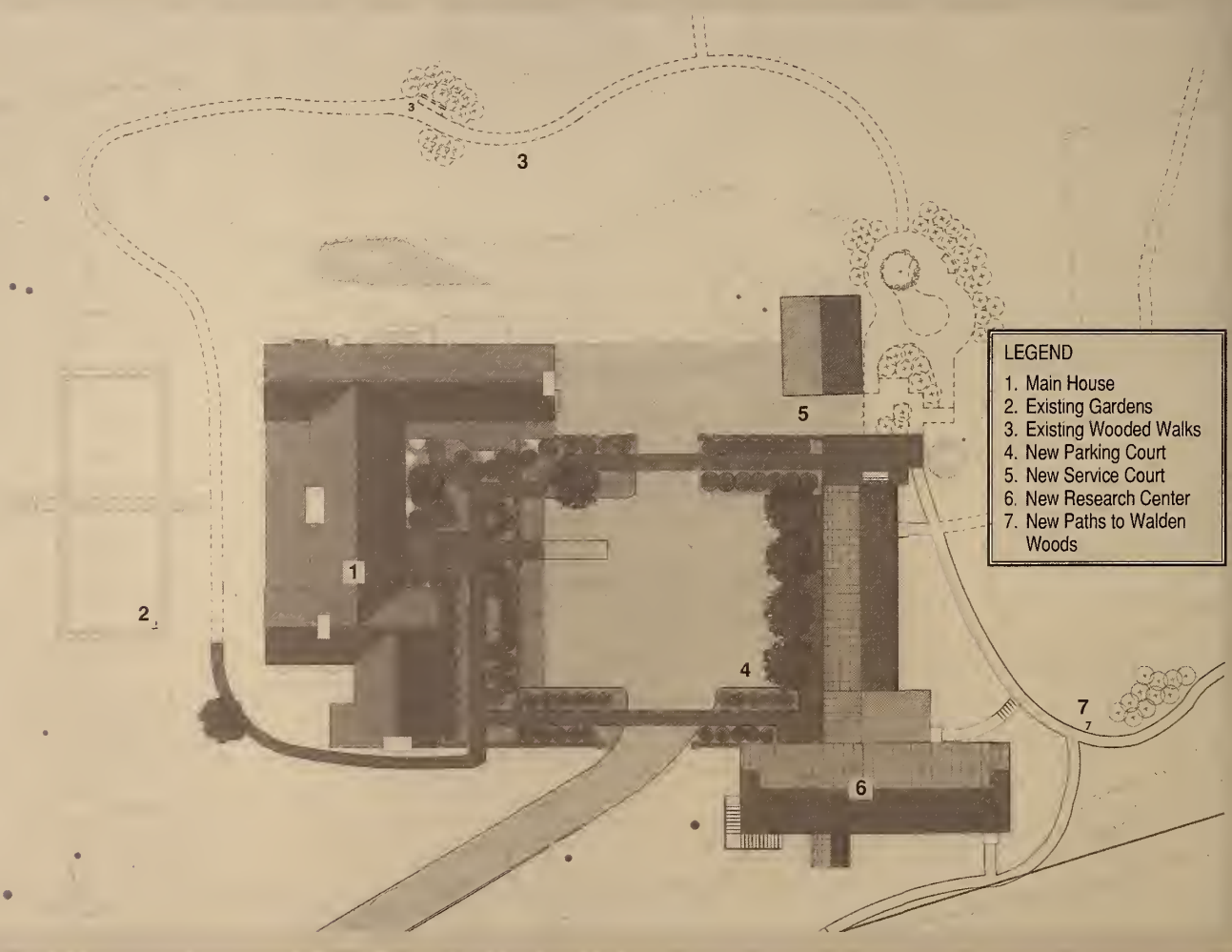
In a written statement Kennedy said, "This award is a prime example of the way the NEH invests in communities across America to enrich the lives of local residents, students and scholars, and visitors to the nation's most renowned historical and cultural sites. Through this grant, Thoreau will speak to generations of Americans in the years ahead."

Dr. Joel Myerson, president of The Thoreau Society, stated, "The Grant indicates that the Walden Woods Project and the Board of Directors of the Society have been able to successfully articulate Thoreau's ideas to a national audience, and it reflects well on the overwhelming support we both have received from the Society's members during this transitional period in the Society's history. I hope that all the members of the Society will now join together to make the Thoreau Institute a reality."

The ground breaking for the Thoreau Institute's new archive and media center was held on September 25, 1995. Construction is expected to begin in March with the completion for the fall of 1996. Estimated construction cost is $2.3 million. The 18-acre site was purchased for $1.55 million in 1994.



The design approach and construction methods employed by Gantaume and McMullen (architects) and Stone Building Company (builders) are reflective of the philosophy and principles for which the institute stands. Every aspect of the project seeks to harmonize the buildings with their surroundings, and to use construction methods that are sensitive to the environment.



A Thoreau Collection

Walter Harding

[Editors' note: The following speech was read at the 1995 Annual Meeting by Thoreau Society Secretary Bradley P. Dean on behalf of Walter Harding.]

About sixty years ago, when I was a freshman in college, I was bitten by a "strong and beautiful bug" like that one Thoreau describes on the last page of *Walden* as coming "out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years." At least that is the only explanation I have for suddenly acquiring a compulsion to read Thoreau. I resisted for a while but eventually went out and bought myself a copy of *Walden.* And that was the start of it all. From that day to this I have felt compelled to learn all I could about Thoreau. I began picking up every scrap of information I could find by or about him—books and articles by him, books and articles about him. The more I acquired, the more I learned. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know. I began to want to write about him, to tell others about him, and so my collecting became more specialized and larger and wider, until now I have the largest collection there is, I believe, of materials by and about Thoreau—more than fifteen thousand books, pamphlets, articles, clippings, manuscripts, and memorabilia, all pertaining to Thoreau. It has been a tremendous help to me in writing about Thoreau—I could not have done without it. But now, after sixty years, I have about written myself out. And so my wife, my four children, and I, not wishing to see this collection go to waste, have decided to give it to the Thoreau Society to have here in its national headquarters for the use of any who wish to study Thoreau.

Unfortunately, these days even Thoreau matters are complicated, and it will take some time. But the processing has begun, and by the time the new library building is ready at the national headquarters, the collection will be there and be available to Thoreau scholars generally.

I cannot hand this collection over without saying thank you to so many of you in the Thoreau Society who have helped me gather it together. If I were just to list your names it would take me hours and hours. But there was rarely a day in the half century that I was your secretary that the mail did not bring to my door word of new material to add to the collection.

I must particularly mention Ruth Wheeler, who helped me dig out and copy so many treasures from Concord attics and archives. Or to take a more contemporary example, there is Koh Kasegawa, the dean of Japanese Thoreau students, whom I met in Tokyo thirty years ago, and with whom I have been exchanging Thoreauviana ever since. But these are only two of the hundreds who have helped me. I hope that in presenting this collection to the Society we have repaid these many generosities.

Founding Thoreau Society member Walter Harding and his wife Marjorie

To make you aware of what is in the collection—and thus make it more useful to you—let me list briefly some of its components. There is a complete collection of all Thoreau first editions and first printings, plus probably ninety percent of all different editions, both in English and in foreign editions. With one exception, a little pamphlet from India I have never been able to run down, there is a complete collection of all books and pamphlets ever published in English about Thoreau: biographies, books of criticism, and so on, plus probably three-quarters of all books in foreign languages about him.

There are copies of far more than half of the doctoral dissertations done on Thoreau and many of the masters' theses. There are several hundred novels in which Thoreau is a character and hundreds of poems about him. There are nearly two hundred musical compositions honoring him. There are hundreds of Thoreau cartoons. There are hundreds of advertisements that have featured quotations from Thoreau. There are drawers full of material about his family, his ancestors, his collateral descendants. There are the texts of dozens of plays about him. There are all the Thoreau Society publications, plus minutes and notes on all our meetings. There are runs of the publications of all the other societies devoted to Thoreau. There are Thoreau t-shirts and Thoreau sweat-shirts and Thoreau pins and buttons.

There are autobiographies and biographies and journals, diaries, and letters of Thoreau's friends. There are microfilms of all Concord newspapers during Thoreau's lifetime. There is a complete run of Concord Social Circle memoirs. There are many annual Concord town reports, including record of Thoreau's working for the town as surveyor and record of his death. There are histories of the various Concord churches he or his friends were associated with. There are biographies of many Concord residents he knew and many of his contemporary literary and naturalist friends. There are catalogs of the flowers, birds, trees, mammals, and insects of Concord. There is a weather report for every day of Thoreau's life. There are duplicates of hundreds of books he had in his library. There are thousands of newspaper and periodical articles—I would estimate probably between ninety and ninety-five per cent of all those ever published—approximately a thousand about Walden alone.

There are Thoreau manuscripts, including a page from "Life without Principle," a court testimonial, autographs of him and other members of his family in books, including three books from the collection of books Thomas Cholmondeley gave him. There are Thoreau pencils. There are drafts and notes for all the books and articles I have written about him.

And perhaps most important of all, there are thousands and thousands of pieces of correspondence with virtually all of the major Thoreau scholars of the past century.

My old friend Perry Miller of Harvard, not without reason, always called me Henry Thoreau's pack rat. The result of this packratedness has been this collection of more than fifteen thousand cataloged items by and about Henry David Thoreau. It has been loads of fun collecting it all together. It has been a tremendous help to me in studying Thoreau. (And it now gives tremendous pleasure to me and my family to hand it along to the Thoreau Society so that other Thoreau scholars can make use of it.) Have fun with it!

Thoreau Society President Dr. Joel Myerson welcomes Senator Edward Kennedy to the Thoreau Institute ground breaking ceremonies.

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